

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 00503 141706Z

70

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0503

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GE, UR, US, UK, FR

SUBJECT: ABRASIMOV'S RETURN TO EAST BERLIN: YEFREMOV
LEAVES WITH CLEAN CONSCIENCE

REF: BONN 4162

1. A CURIOUS AND SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE FORMULATION IN SOVIET AMBASSADOR YEFREMOV'S FAREWELL SPEECH, ON THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE FROM EAST BERLIN, SEEMS LIKELY TO FEED SPECULATION THAT HIS ABRUPT TRANSFER IS RELATED TO SHIFTS IN SOVIET POLICY--WITHOUT, HOWEVER, PROVIDING ANY ADDITIONAL CLUES AS TO THE REASONS FOR OR DIRECTIONS OF SUCH A SHIFT. AT A FAREWELL DINNER ON MARCH 12, AT WHICH HONECKER DECORATED YEFREMOV AS A "HERO OF LABOR," THE LATTER ASSERTED THAT HE COULD SAY "WITH A CLEAN CONSCIENCE" THAT HE AND HIS ENTIRE STAFF HAD CONSISTENTLY CARRIED OUT THE MANDATE GIVEN HIM BY BREZHNEV HIMSELF.

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PAGE 02 USBERL 00503 141706Z

2. FOLLOWING IS AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE PERTINENT EXCERPT FROM YEFREMOV'S SPEECH AS REPORTED IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND:

QUOTE I CAME TO YOUR COUNTRY WITH SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU, ITS GENERAL SECRETARY, COMRADE LEONID ILYICH BREZHNEV, AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO CONTRIBUTE IN ALL AREAS TO THE STRENGTHENING OF THE FRATERNAL FRIENDSHIP AND THE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR PARTIES, STATES, AND PEOPLES. THESE INSTRUCTIONS WERE ALSO FULLY AND COMPLETELY IN CONFORMITY WITH MY PERSONAL EFFORTS AND DESIRES AS A COMMUNIST.

I AM ABLE TO SAY WITH A CLEAN CONSCIENCE THAT IN MY DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES I HAVE CONSISTENTLY FOLLOWED THESE INSTRUCTIONS. IN ADDITION, THE ENTIRE STAFF OF THE EMBASSY AND ALL THE SOVIET CITIZENS WHO WORK IN OUR OFFICES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE GDR HAVE BEEN AND CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THESE INSTRUCTIONS. END QUOTE.

3. YEFREMOV DEVOTED MOST OF THE REST OF HIS SPEECH TO DETAILING THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIET-GDR RELATIONS HAD IN FACT BEEN STRENGTHENED DURING HIS TENURE AND PRAISING THE GREAT STRIDES FORWARD MADE BY THE GDR, BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

R. COMMENT: ONE MISSION SOURCE WELL-CONNECTED WITH THE INNER-GERMAN MINISTRY SEES IN THE QUOTED PASSAGE INDICATIONS OF A POWER SHIFT IN MOSCOW, WITH ABRASIMOV COMING FRESH FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO IMPLEMENT A LINE DIFFERENT FROM THE BREZHNEV LINE YEFREMOV SAYS HE HAS BEEN FOLLOWING. IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER EVIDENCE THAT SUCH A SHIFT HAS OCCURRED WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO EVALUATE THIS PARTICULAR THESIS. YEFREMOV'S REMARKS MAY NONETHELESS BE OF INTEREST AS ONE MORE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE. GEORGE

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